

# City of New Haven

## Vehicle Use Policy

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*Purpose:* The purpose of this policy is to define and describe the usage parameters related to the operation of City of New Haven vehicles by City employees. The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Ensure the safety and well being of City employees
- b) Facilitate the efficient and effective usage of City resources
- c) Minimize liability to the City
- d) Establish standard requirements and procedures for all City of New Haven employees who drive a motor vehicle including over the road equipment in the course of City business. In this Policy, the term vehicle shall be defined as any motor vehicle including over the road equipment.

It is incumbent upon all operators of City vehicles to follow all motor vehicle laws and rules of the road, and to operate City vehicles in a safe and courteous manner. It is recognized that this policy may not cover all instances and examples of acceptable vehicle usage. In cases not specifically covered in this policy, the employee is responsible to utilize common sense and seek clarification from their immediate supervisor or the Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator. Failure to adhere to all aspects of this policy may result in the employee being held personally responsible for damages, and may result in disciplinary actions if so determined by the employee's Department Head.

The City shall also provide mandatory driver safety courses to all authorized drivers. These courses shall reinforce the motor vehicle policies of the City of New Haven and provide employees with an overview of the concepts of safe driving. Authorized drivers must attend these courses when scheduled in order to have continued permission to drive

*Issuing Authority:* The Office of the Chief Administrative Officer for the City of New Haven is the issuing authority for this policy. Daily administration is the responsibility of all Coordinators and Department heads.

All employees who will drive vehicles at any time during the course of their employment must become familiar with this policy, and will be required to sign a statement that they understand and shall adhere to this policy document before they are granted on-going permission to drive a City vehicle.

*Date of Issue:* This policy is effective January 8, 2004.

# City of New Haven

## Vehicle Use Policy

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### Section 1. General Vehicle Policy

This policy document applies to all employees who operate City vehicles of any type on either a regular or occasional basis. The City reserves the right to deny any employee the use of a City vehicle and may choose not to indemnify any employee who fails to adhere to the policies and procedures contained in this document.

The following represents the General Motor Vehicle Policy of the City of New Haven:

- 1) The employee must have written authorization from his/her Department Head to operate a City vehicle of any type. The Department Head shall submit to the Risk Management Program Coordinator AND Department of Human Resources copies of the Vehicle Use Policy sign off form for each authorized employee along with copies of their drivers licenses as described in item 2) below. The Department Head shall notify the Risk Management Program Coordinator of the addition of authorized drivers or any changes in an authorized driver's status on an ongoing basis. Additionally, the Department Head shall submit an annual listing of authorized drivers to the Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator's office along with copies of their drivers' licenses as described in item 2) below.
- 2) In order to be authorized to operate a City vehicle, an operator must be an employee of the City of New Haven and must possess a valid State of Connecticut Driver's License. This license must be the appropriate license for the equipment to be operated. The Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator's office shall maintain a file with photocopies of employee Driver's licenses, which they shall update annually with information provided by City departments. If an employee operates a city vehicle without a valid and appropriate license, the City of New Haven shall not indemnify, nor will it appear and defend the driver in the case of an accident. Any City employee operating a City vehicle with an inappropriate license may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination, if it is determined that the employee had failed to inform his/her Supervisor regarding his/her license status.
- 3) In the event an employee's drivers license is suspended for any reason, that employee shall promptly notify the department head with written notice of said revocation, within one working day and a copy of this notice shall be forwarded by the supervisor to the Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator. The employee shall not operate a City vehicle during the term of the stipulated suspension. If an employee with a suspended license operates a City vehicle, the City of New Haven may not indemnify nor shall it appear and defend the employee in the case of an accident. The Department Head may take any appropriate disciplinary action against employees who operate a City vehicle with a suspended license.

# City of New Haven

## Vehicle Use Policy

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- 4) The driver and all occupants must wear seat belts at all times when operating any City vehicles, including over the road equipment.
- 5) The driver must obey all traffic laws at all times. It is incumbent upon all operators of City vehicles to follow all motor vehicle laws, rules of the road, and operate the vehicle in a safe and courteous manner.
- 6) The use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any drugs or substances that may affect the employee's ability to drive safely are prohibited.
- 7) Safety is always a primary concern, therefore, it is the responsibility of each employee to operate any City vehicle in a defensive way and obey traffic laws.
- 8) Vehicles shall be operated only by the employee who has signed out or has been assigned the use of a city vehicle in accordance with the procedures established by their Department Head.
- 9) In the event of a motor vehicle accident, whether a City vehicle or an authorized personal vehicle, it is the driver's responsibility to immediately notify local police, their immediate supervisor, and ensure that a Police Accident Report is completed at the scene. The driver's immediate supervisor is to notify the Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator and their Department Head immediately. The Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator will determine if investigators from the Office of the Corporation Counsel will be notified in order to take photographs of property damage and the accident scene. In addition, a City of New Haven Corporation Counsel Motor Vehicle Accident Report must be completed by the employee and their supervisor. The report is then to be submitted to the appropriate Department Head who will forward a copy to the Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator immediately for all accidents regardless of the amount of damage. Accident procedures and forms shall be located in the vehicle glove box at all times. These packages are available from the police, fire and public works garages. Failure to report an accident in accordance with this provision will result in immediate revocation of driving privileges and may, at the Department Head's discretion, result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge. In addition, failure to report accidents in accordance with the above requirements may result in claims being charged to the department budget.
- 10) It is the responsibility of all city employees to report all vehicular infractions issued against them while operating a City vehicle to their Department Head, who will then forward copies to the Risk Manager Program Coordinator and Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator. Failure to report an infraction in accordance with this provision will result in immediate suspension or revocation of driving privileges. Payment of any fines or legal costs associated with vehicular infractions incurred while operating a City vehicle shall

# City of New Haven

## Vehicle Use Policy

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be the sole responsibility of the driver. An authorized driver's failure to report vehicular infractions received while operating a City vehicle may result in disciplinary action.

- 11) The Corporation Counsel Chief Investigator will establish and maintain a tracking system to monitor employee driving records and make recommendations to Department Heads regarding individual employee's eligibility to drive. The City reserves the right to verify an employee's driving record through the Department of Motor Vehicles, on a random basis.
- 12) Except for employees who have restricted or unrestricted use of an assigned vehicle as described elsewhere within this policy, the use of City vehicles for personal business is prohibited. In the event of an accident occurring while an employee is engaged in unauthorized personal business in a City vehicle, the City shall not indemnify the driver nor will it appear and defend him/her. Any employee who uses a City vehicle for personal business without prior authorization from the Department Head, or their designee, may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 13) The transportation of Hazardous Materials must be in accordance with Department of Transportation regulations and approved in writing by the appropriate Department Head. Shipping through approved carriers whenever possible is recommended.
- 14) If flammable liquid must be transported, it must be transported in accordance with all federal, state and local regulations.
- 15) Firearms are not allowed in a City vehicle at any time except as permitted by the City Firearms Policy.
- 16) Non-employees, off duty employees, unauthorized persons and animals are not permitted in City vehicles at any time, without the express permission of the driver's supervisor.
- 17) Hitchhikers are prohibited in City vehicles at any time.

### **Section 2. Vehicles and Equipment Pools Available for Employee Use**

Within the City of New Haven, there are a variety of citywide and departmental vehicle and equipment pools for work-related use only. In addition to the City Owned Vehicle Policy, individual departments shall establish departmental procedures for access and use of the pool vehicles.

# City of New Haven

## Vehicle Use Policy

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### ***1) Department Pool Vehicle and Daily Assignments from Department Equipment Pools:***

Vehicles in this category shall be operated by the employee who has signed out or been assigned the use of the vehicle by supervisors from the work sites or car pool lots. All City employees who use a car pool vehicle or other vehicles assigned from job sites (such as the Public Works garage, the Parks garage, the Police Services facility, etc.) must adhere to section 1 of the City-Owned Vehicle Policy and be an authorized driver as outlined in section 1. All employees should present their valid Connecticut driver's license when picking-up a pool vehicle. Vehicles shall be garaged at the work site. An appropriate and valid license is always a prerequisite for any vehicle use.

### ***2) Downtown Car Pool:***

Vehicles in this category may be signed out at one of several Coordinators' offices. Each such office will be responsible for maintaining a sign out log with the employee's name, department, time taken, time returned, starting and ending mileage and vehicle number. City pool vehicles are to be returned to the lot from which they were removed, the parking brake set and the vehicle locked. Immediately thereafter, employees shall return the pool vehicle keys to the issuing coordinator's office and complete the car pool log by entering the starting and ending mileage from the vehicle's odometer, and the time returned. A vehicle inspection report must be returned with the vehicle keys at the end of each employee's use. The employee is to note any damage or mechanical problems. Failure of the employee to complete this form may result in the employee being held responsible for any damage discovered on the previously assigned vehicle. Coordinators will forward a copy of the form to the Fleet Manager. If there is an urgent problem with the vehicle, the Fleet Manager must be contacted immediately at (946-8329).

Pool vehicles must be returned to the lot with a minimum of one-half tank of fuel. Pool vehicles are to be refueled at the Public Works garage at 34 Middletown Avenue. Drivers must report to the garage office to get fuel.

### ***3) On-call Emergency/Overnight Use:***

City vehicles may be assigned by Department Heads for overnight use to an employee to allow them to respond back to work for work related activities on an on-call basis. Personal use of City vehicles in this category is prohibited. Vehicles may be garaged overnight at the employee's residence during the period in which the employee is officially on call only.

## **Section 3. Vehicle Assignments for Exclusive Use**

The Chief Administrative Officer may assign vehicles to employees for exclusive use under the categories listed below as the need arises. The Chief Administrative Officer may also choose to add or remove employees from the list of authorized vehicle assignments for exclusive use as operational needs change. Such changes shall be reported to the Board of Aldermen with the regular reporting of vehicle mileage reimbursement submitted by the Controller's office. The

# City of New Haven Vehicle Use Policy

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Chief Administrative Officer shall maintain a list and review all exclusive use assignments semi-annually.

***Types of Assignment:***

***1) Assigned Vehicle for Employee's Unrestricted Use:***

City vehicle usage is not restricted in this category. Vehicles may be garaged at the employee's residence. Only the Mayor has unrestricted use of a City vehicle.

***2) Assigned Vehicle for the Employee's Restricted Use:***

City vehicles may be assigned to employees who need to respond, at any time, to work related appointments and emergencies. Such employees may use some discretion in the personal use of their assigned vehicles. These employees have 24-hour use of their assigned vehicles and may garage them at their residences overnight due to the duties of their positions. Under no circumstances shall such vehicles be taken outside of the State of Connecticut, except in accordance with the City's Travel Policy. All personal use, including commuting to and from work, must be reported and reimbursed monthly by the employee as prescribed by the Department of Finance at rates established by the United States Internal Revenue Service unless otherwise specified in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

***3) Assigned Vehicle / Work Related Use Only:***

City vehicles may be assigned to the employees in this category to allow them to respond back to work for work related activities as required. Personal use of City vehicles in this category is prohibited. Vehicles may be garaged overnight at the employee's residence.

Mileage commuting to and from work, must be reported and reimbursed monthly by the employee as prescribed by the Department of Finance at rates established by the United States Internal Revenue Service unless otherwise specified in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

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Issuing Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Previously Revised: 8/98, 4/00

A copy of this policy is available for review at the Department of Human Resources, and on the City's computer network at N:\policies\vehicle.doc